

SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
LAKE COUNTY PROBATE COURT
Under the direction of Judge Ted Klammer

The summer internship program was started in 2004 to provide college students, with various academic interests, an opportunity to understand the role of the law. Through on-the-job training, the interns learn how the law affects the every day lives of people and gain a better understanding of how the law interacts with many other professions.

Probate Court has had the opportunity to sponsor over 60 interns with academic interest in fields such as; legal, medical, psychology, sociology, teaching, political science, history and criminal and civil justice. Many of the interns from our program have gone on to law school, two have become doctors and numerous others have become nurses, school teachers, and administration professionals.

I would like to give you the background as to how the Summer Internship Program came into fruition. Probate Court has over 800 wards and receives requests on a daily basis from numerous facilities to appoint guardians to potential wards who have no family members to support them. To make sure that each and every ward is receiving the best care possible, the court implemented the Senior Volunteer Visitor Program. Over the years, the Summer Interns have contributed substantially to the appointment of volunteer visitors by performing baseline reports for each ward of the court and providing valuable outcomes for the program. After a review of these reports, the interns recommend which wards have very little support, what wards have very few visitors or who is lonely and in need of a Volunteer Visitor to be appointed to them.

The internship program has expanded over the years. The Summer Interns attend trials in the General Division of the Court of Common Pleas and visit the Municipal and Juvenile Courts. The Interns visit all the Mental Health facilities in Lake County and learn how the mental health facilities interact with the courts and specifically with the Mentor Municipal Mental Health Court. The interns are given a project to submit at the end of the summer. One year, the project given to the interns was to simply write a paper on the impact their visits had on the wards in nursing homes. I would like to quote a statement made within a paper submitted by an intern... "I really owe Judge Klammer and the Probate Court along with Neighboring for helping me with this job and helping me find my calling. I switched my major from Business to Health Administration and Long-term Healthcare. A goal that I have recently set for myself is to open up my own nursing home." He states further "I know that with my own experience with this program, I will take away memories and experiences that will be with me throughout my professional career."

If a society is judged by how well it treats its most vulnerable citizens then Lake County is fortunate to have a Probate Judge who takes to heart this sentiment. Through the leadership, commitment and passion of Probate Judge Ted Klammer, Lake County's

most vulnerable senior citizens can rest peacefully. Each year, Judge Klammer's internship program identifies college students who are interested in learning about their community. The goal of the program is experiential as the students learn first hand the needs of its citizens, the agencies and resources available to meet those needs as well as interacting with those citizens who utilize the resources. By the end of the ten week internship, the students have observed court proceedings-criminal, civil, probate, drug and mental health court. They have worked at senior service centers, participated in Developmental Disability workshops, worked at food pantries, assisted with the Lake County Drug Repository, listened to crisis calls, assisted with fund raisers and most importantly have visited wards residing in nursing homes within Lake County. In this capacity, they are additional eyes and ears for the Court to ensure that the most vulnerable are being cared for with respect and dignity. They have also attended Commissioners meetings and Council meetings within their own community to observe how legislation and funding decisions are made. Of course, there is also some fun involved as they have worked in the various Metro Parks within Lake County. It is hoped that this experience will make these young adults better citizens as they begin their careers by making them cognizant of what is happening within their own community. One day they may be the voice that makes a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable. It is an honor to participate in this program with these young adults.

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